



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HEALTH UPDATE

DC Department of Health Conduct TB Test at Cardozo High School

(Washington, D.C.) - The District of Columbia Department of Health recently conducted testing for tuberculosis exposure at Cardozo High School in Northeast. The tests were conducted as a precaution after a Cardozo High School student was hospitalized and tested positive for tuberculosis last week.

“We conducted skin tests on seventy-two students and teachers who were in close contact with the student to see if there was any exposure. Skin tests do not indicate whether there is any disease,” says Chief Medical Officer Dr. Michael S.A. Richardson. According to Richardson, the school sent letters to parents last week notifying them about the girl's illness. “Tests were conducted with the full consent of the students’ parents.”

TB, or tuberculosis, is a disease caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria can attack any part of the body, but they usually attack the lungs.

There are about 80 cases of TB every year in the District, but usually fewer than four occur in students. Because the infection and disease is usually spread through close contact, it is unlikely that another student could contract it through casual contact in the hallways. “There is no need for parents to be alarmed because from our initial testing, it is unlikely that other students were exposed,” states Richardson. However, Richardson warns parents to be cautious and to look for possible signs of disease, which include unexplained weight loss, fever, persistent cough, and loss of appetite and energy.

The student arrived from another country last year and was at the school only for a short time. Skin testing is typically the first step in determining if a person is infected. DOH plans to conduct additional tests next week. For more information, please call the Department of Health at 202-442-9371 (8:15 AM – 4:45 PM) or 202-727-6161 (after 4:45 PM), or visit the CDC’s website at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Editor’s Note - Categories of Health Alert messages

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

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